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This testimony submitted for the 17 March Public Health Committee hearing for HB 5326 (An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients)

My name is John Pike and I live in Middletown having been a Connecticut resident for 30 years. I'm employed as a licensed physician assistant, practicing at St Francis Hospital and Medical Center.

I'm testifying in opposition to HB 5326 as I believe that this proposed legislation would have a negative effect on the time-honored relationship of trust between a provider and a patient that dates back to Hippocrates and his rule that doctors must not kill. The oath reads, "I will give no deadly drug if asked for it, neither will I make a suggestion to this effect."

It is vital that attention be given to what physician-assisted suicide (PAS) is and is not about:

- It's not about pain since methods exist today that make dying in pain unnecessary.
- It's not about preventing extraordinary suffering in an intensive care unit, or elsewhere, as there are policies in place to stop treatment without actively killing the patient.
- It's not because patients lack another choice. They already have a choice to stop unwanted treatment whether it is ventilators, chemotherapy, feeding tubes, etc. They can even choose to stop eating and drinking which would hasten their death – also with pain and suffering control measures available.
- It is about significant depression that often exists in patients who choose this avenue.
- Importantly, it is about provider responsibility – physically and morally – to participate in the slippery slope that will, not may, lead to euthanasia. Where would it end? As the healthcare system becomes more burdened, will the terminally-ill, the elderly, the disabled or even the poor – maybe one of your family - become targets for ending their lives and the "burden" on society?
- This legislation also opens the door for potential subsequent legislation that would mandate participation by any provider. We have already seen attempts, on a federal level, to remove the ability of providers to follow their conscience by refusing to participate in a number of procedures that violate their beliefs.

Thank you for your time in reading my testimony.